

# Macron has won the presidency – now he must turn his attention to the ‘third round’ in June

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Emmanuel Macron is the new President of France, but having won the presidency, he now faces the daunting task of securing a majority in the country's upcoming legislative elections. [Marta Lorimer](#) writes that although early opinion polling has been encouraging for Macron's 'En Marche!' movement, the campaign will present a number of major challenges.



**French voters will go back to the polls in June to cast their ballots for the legislative elections. Photo credit: [Rama](#) (CC BY 2.0)**

It's been a very long presidential election, ending with an outcome that even until early 2017, very few could have predicted. Emmanuel Macron's victory will be counted as one of the most extraordinary political victories in recent years. But Le Pen's accomplishment should not be underestimated either. In 2002, her father didn't make it past the 20% threshold. She has managed to reach around 35% and, most importantly, normalised the vote for a radical right party.

Perhaps the most intriguing declaration to come from the FN's leader is the announcement of a change of name for the party. In her concession speech, she outlined a profound reform of the party, transforming it from the *Front National* into an 'Alliance of Patriots'.

Le Pen's procedure sounds strangely familiar to that of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), which in the early nineties transformed from a neo-fascist party into the conservative National Alliance, in a bid to become more 'coalitionable' and attract more voters. It's a risky gamble she is taking, which may not go down well with hardliners and could lead to a split. It will be interesting to observe the party's evolution in the coming weeks.

As far as Macron is concerned, the third round of the presidential election starts now for him. One of the

characteristics of the French semi-presidential system is that it makes legislative elections ‘second-order elections’, since there is much more attention put on the presidential race. In this case, however, we might see the legislatures become an interesting race in their own right, since they will ultimately determine just how much the new president will be able to accomplish.

In fact, while the president has significant control over foreign affairs, in terms of domestic politics he shares his powers with the government. What this means is that if Macron fails to win an outright majority in the legislative elections, he will either be unable to push forward his ambitious agenda for change, or he will be forced to compromise frequently.

Macron now needs to hit the ground running if he doesn’t want to end up being a president without a government. Macron has often stated his confidence with regard to his ability to win a parliamentary majority. To govern on his own, Macron would need his *En Marche* movement to win 289 seats. Some early polling gave promising results for the new president, but the movement still faces some serious challenges.

So far his party has only presented 14 candidates, and suffers from a lack of funding. In addition, it is less established on the ground, which could make campaigning a challenging task to say the least. Finally, while in the presidential race, he has been endorsed by almost all parties in an attempt to keep Le Pen away from power, he will not benefit from the same rally in the legislative elections.

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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of EUROPP – European Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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Marta Lorimer is a PhD candidate at the European Institute, London School of Economics. She holds a degree in European Studies from Sciences Po Paris and the LSE. Her research interests include far right parties, European politics and ideas of ‘Europe’.



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